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HIS 315: Music and Politics in 20th c Europe **Midterm Creative Project Assignment**

Overview

The goal of this assignment is to explore a major issue of musical politics in 20th century Europe through research, analysis, and written argumentation, while also building your digital humanities skills. Your task is to choose an issue that we have not discussed in this class, research it, create a page on our course website in which you make a **historical argument** about it, and give a 15-minute presentation of your work in class. This project is meant to be creative as well as scholarly. Please have fun!

This assignment requires you to do some research on your own. It is not a major research project, but you will need to do enough outside reading to be able to describe your subject in detail and make a well-grounded argument about its significance for 20th c. European musical politics.

Instructions

1) Choose a **topic**. You may select one of the topics below, or you are also welcome to choose a topic of your own. If you choose your own topic, you must get my approval!

2) Go to the **library** and make sure you have access to at least **three sources**. This include one **primary source** and two **secondary sources**. One of your sources may be a source assigned for this class, but the other two you must find on your own. It is very likely that you will need to order sources through **E-Z Borrow**! Give yourself enough time for those things to be delivered.

3) Meet with me! At this check in, I will ask you to tell me about your topic, sources, and proposed thesis statement. If everything is in order, we won't need to talk for long. If you have questions or have run into any roadblocks, this is a good opportunity to work together to find a solution that helps you move forward.

4) Write up your findings on your webpage. Your text should be **1000-1200 words** long. You should outline your chosen topic clearly, explain how it fits into its historical context, and make an evidence-based **argument** about it. Your webpage should also include some form of **media**. You can embed an image, a sound file, a YouTube video, or all three! Finally, your webpage should include a properly formatted **bibliography**. You must use the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

5) Give a **15-minute presentation** of your work in class. You are welcome to write out a script or improvise from notes—whatever is most comfortable for you. You should plan to speak for about ten minutes; the last five minutes will be open for Q&A with your colleagues. In your presentation, be sure to explain your chosen topic and situate it in its historical context. Most importantly, give a clear version of your **thesis statement** and back it up with evidence. Don't forget to use your webpage, particularly your media sources. I encourage you to play audio and/or video clips and discuss any images you have included.

Submission and Presentation

You don't need to turn in anything on paper for this project! When you **publish your webpage**, that will count as your submission. WordPress will time stamp it, so I know you've done your work on time.

*The deadline for publishing your webpage is **Wednesday, Oct. 16 at 10pm***
Every day late will detract from your grade. I will not accept submissions after Weds., Oct. 23.

We will do Midterm Presentations in class on **Thursday, Oct. 17** and **Tuesday, Oct. 22**.

Good luck!!!

Suggested Presentation Topics (choose one of these or create your own!)

Igor Stravinsky's ballet, *The Rite of Spring*

Alban Berg's opera *Lulu*

The Stalinist movie musical *Volga, Volga!*

Benjamin Britten's oratorio, *War Requiem*

American jazz performers in Europe in the 1900s-1940s (Josephine Baker is a good place to start)

Turkish singer and drag queen Zeki Müren

George Harrison and Ravi Shankar's *Concert for Bangladesh*

Soviet avant-garde composers of the 1960s-1980s (may include: Edison Denisov, Alfred Schnittke, Arvo Paert, Sofia Gubaidulina, and others)

Social Democratic choruses in Western Europe before WWII

Czechoslovak underground rock band Plastic People of the Universe